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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 /068 W
----------063473 111401Z /14
R 102013Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9089
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PE
SUBJECT: SEMI-MONTLY UPDATE ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

RE: (A) LIMA 1150, (B) LIMA 1648

SUMMARY: THE ELECION CAMPAIGN CONTINUES ON COURSE TOWARD THE JUNE 4 ELECTION DATE. ALL THIRTEEN ELIGIBILE PARTIES EITHER ARE "OFFICIALLY" OR "PROVISIONALLY" ENROLLED. THREE, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED ON ELECTION LAW TECHNICALITIEIS. EX-PRESIDENT BELAUNDE RETURNS TO LIMA TO SPUR HIS PARTY'S CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. AS OF MARCH 9, EIGHT OF THIRTEEN PETITIONING POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN "OFFICIALLY" ENROLLED FOR THE JUNE 4 CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION. THE OTHER FIVE PARTIES HAVE BEEN "PROVISIONALLY" ENROLLED BUT THREE OF THESE FACE PROBLEMS. FIRST, THE PERUVIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) HAS BEEN CHALLENGED UNDER A CONSTITUTIONAL PROHIBITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER. SECONDLY, THE POPULAR SOCIALIST ACTION (APS) PARTY, A FACTION OF EX-PRESIDENT FERNANDO BELAUNDE'S POPULAR ACTION (AP), HAS BEEN CHALLENDED FOR USING A NAME SIMILAR TO AP'S. FINALLY, THE
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REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY (PSR) HAS BEEN CHALLENGED BECAUSE IT WAS FORMALY CONSTITUTED AS A PARTY IN NOV 1976 DURING A DECLARED STATE OF EMERGENCY, WHEN ALL POLITICAL ACTIVITY WAS BANNED. THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (NE) HAS PROMISED TO RULE ON EACH OF THESE CHALLENGES BY MARCH 13. THE PCP, APS AND PSR ARE ANTI-GOVERNMENT LEFTIST PARTIES BUT EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT CHALLENGES TO THEIR LEGALITY RESULT FROM GOP HARASSMENT.

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THE JNE APPEARS TO BE INTERPRETING THE ELECTION DECREES IMPARTIALLY.

2. EX-PRESIDENT BELAUNDE RETURNED TO LIMA MARCH 9 AMID RUMORS OF SERIOUS INTERNAL PROBLEMS IN AP, THE PARTY HE LED TO VICTORY IN 1963. SINCE BELAUNDE DEPARTED PERU FOR WASHINGTON IN JANUARY, AP'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS SLOWED AND HIS FIRST CONCERN WILL BE TO REINVIGORATE AP'S ELECTIONEERING. HE WILL ALSO PRESIDE OVER THE SELECTION OF HIS PARTY'S LIST OF CANDIDATES WHICH HE WILL HEAD. (ALL PARTIES' LISTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE JNE BY MARCH 16).)BELUANDE IS ALSO SCHEDULED TO CAMPAIGN OUTSIDE OF LIMA IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS.

3. AP'S MAIN OPPOSITION, APRA AND THE POPULAR CHRISTIAN PARTY (PPC), CONTINUE TO HOLD RALLIES AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. APRA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ITS OCTOGENARIAN LEADER, HAYA DE LA TORRE, WILL HEAD ITS LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE ELECTION. APRA'S LIST OF CANDIDATES WILL PROBABLY BE MADE KNOWN OVER THE WEEKEND. HAYA DRAWS LARGE, FRIENDLY CROWDS WHEREVER HE APPEARS AND CONTINUES TO ATTACK THE GOP FOR PAST FAILURES. LUSI BEDOYA REYES, PPC'S LEADER, IS ALSO CAMPAIGNING VIGOROUSLY AROUND THE COUNTRY BUT TO SMALLER CROWDS. INFORMAL ACCOUNTS SUGGEST THAT THE PPC, A RELATIVELY NEW PARTY (FOUNDED IN 1966), IS RUNNING A WELL-ORGANIZED AND WELL-FINANCED ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

4.COMMENT: THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN THROUGH THE FIRST WEEK OF
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MARCH HAS BEEN MARKED BY (1) THE RUSH TO COMPLY WITH THE GOP'S COMPLICATED BUT SO FAR FAIRLY ADMINISTERED MASS OF ELECTION REGULATIONS; AND (2) THE RENOVATION OF OLD-LINE POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS LONG INACTIVE. PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ FIRMLY RESTATED HIS COMMITTMENT TO ELECTION DURING A NATIONWIDE FIRESIDE CHAT FEB 26, (WHICH, INCIDENTALLY DREW ALMOST UNAMIMOUS PRAISE FROM THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES FOR ITS CONCILIATORY TONE). AT THIS POINT THE JUNE 4 ELECTIONS APPEAR WELL ON TRACK, NOTWITH-STANDING OCCASIONAL RUMORS OF POSSIBLE
CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTION FORECASTS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIMA02141
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780109-0880
Format: TEL
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780383/aaaacshv.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2baaacc9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3375250
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEMI-MONTLY UPDATE ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS RE: (A) LIMA 1150, (B) LIMA 1648 SUMMARY: THE ELECION CAMPAIGN CONTINUES ON COURSE
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PE
To: STATE LA PAZ
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2baaacc9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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